

# First breeding record of Heuglin's Wheatear *Oenanthe heuglini* for Senegal

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**Première donnée sur la reproduction du Traquet de Heuglin *Oenanthe heuglini* au Sénégal.** En avril 2012, jusqu'à cinq Traquets de Heuglin *Oenanthe heuglini*, dont un adulte avec trois jeunes, ont été observés à deux endroits sur le plateau de Dande (12°21'N 12°19'W) et Nandoumary (12°19'N 12°20'W), à l'extrême sud-est du Sénégal, à quelques kilomètres de la frontière avec la Guinée-Conakry. Il s'agit de la première donnée de reproduction de cette espèce pour le pays.

On 7 April 2012, while censusing birds on a plateau near Dande (12°21'N 12°19'W), Kédougou region, south-east Senegal, GM & JM observed an adult Heuglin's Wheatear *Oenanthe heuglini* with at least three dependent juveniles. Ten days later, on 17 April, what was presumably the same adult and a single fledgling were seen again at the same place (Fig. 1). On 20 April, an adult was observed near the village of Nandoumary (12°19'N 12°20'W), c.3.5 km from the first site (Fig. 2).

The adults' overall appearance, especially that at Dande, were reminiscent of Isabelline Wheatear *O. isabellina*, but several features permitted us to eliminate that species as well as others that could occur in the area, such as Northern *O. oenanthe*, Black-eared *O. hispanica* and Desert Wheatears *O. deserti*, none of which breeds in western Africa (Borrow & Demey 2014). First, the dark chestnut head, upperparts and wings contrasted strongly

with the rufous-buff underparts, a pattern not shared by Isabelline Wheatear. Female Northern, Black-eared and Desert Wheatears show some contrast, but only between the wing feathers and body. Isabelline shows a less contrasting pattern, with the exception of the black alula and dark primaries and tertials, which are usually very conspicuous. The adult in Fig. 1 shows some contrast between the flight feathers and coverts. This might reflect wear, as the belly was also quite pale buff, rather than rufous. The pale buff supercilium strongly contrasted with the chestnut crown and dark brown lores. Contrast is weak in Northern, Black-eared and Desert Wheatears, but quite strong in Isabelline. However, Isabelline's supercilium is white and contrasts with the sandy-brown head and pale brown lores. The 'T'-patterned tail eliminated Desert Wheatear, whose tail has a very broad black band. Black-eared Wheatear shows a large



**Figure 1.** Adult Heuglin's Wheatear *Oenanthe heuglini* (right) with fledgling, Dande, Senegal, 17 April 2012 (Guillermo Mayor)

Traquet de Heuglin *Oenanthe heuglini*, adulte (à droite) avec jeune, Dande, Sénégal, 17 avril 2012 (Guillermo Mayor)



**Figure 2.** Adult Heuglin's Wheatear *Oenanthe heuglini*, Nandoumary, Senegal, 20 April 2012 (Guillermo Mayor)

Traquet de Heuglin *Oenanthe heuglini* adulte, Nandoumary, Sénégal, 20 avril 2012 (Guillermo Mayor)

amount of white in its tail with an almost broken black 'T'. Isabelline and Northern Wheatears' tail patterns are more similar to Heuglin's. However, in Heuglin's the black band covers half of the tail and the inner edge of the 'T' appears rounded, as in the individuals we observed.

The habitat at Dande consisted of a broad glade within wooded savanna on a plateau with many mushroom-like termite mounds. There was no grassy vegetation due to dry-season fires. Habitat at Nandoumary was similar: open, burnt grassland with many mushroom-like termitaria. Both plateaux are 470 m high and represent the north-westernmost extension of the Fouta-Djallon massif (Fernández-García *et al.* 2013).

Heuglin's Wheatear is widespread in the Sahel belt, from Mali to Ethiopia and Eritrea. The southern limits of its range are formed by the northern savannas between north-east Guinea and Cameroon and the Central African Republic (Collar 2005). The species' preferred habitat consists of open fields with rocks and low grass, and often burnt grasslands. It is considered a resident and intra-African migrant. Although the species is common in Mali and north-eastern Guinea, with records for Mauritania (Isenmann *et al.* 2010) and Guinea-Bissau (Guilherme 2014), there is just one previous record in Senegal, of a single in Djoudj National Park on 18 January 2007 (Le Nevé *et al.* 2011), and breeding had not been recorded (Borrow & Demey 2011, Dowsett *et al.* 2014). The nearest limits of the previously known breeding range lie c.300 km east of our study area, in Mali (Borrow & Demey 2014). The dates of our breeding record accord with those of the species in the western Sahel, i.e. the late dry season (December–April; Macgregor 1950).

Both sites where Heuglin's Wheatear was recorded lie within the Dindéfello Community Reserve, where the Spanish branch of the Jane Goodall Institute is developing a conservation project for the West African subspecies of Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes verus* and promoting a local-community, ecotourism-based development. Recently, the reserve has been classified as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International (A. Ajagbe *in litt.* 2014).

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